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RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

Written statement*/ submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[5 February 2001]

*/ This written statement is issued, unedited, as received in English and Spanish from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE. *200-0782*

ENG

Racial Discrimination

Society for Threatened Peoples would like to draw the attention of the honourable United Nations Commission on Human Rights to the situation of Aborigine peoples in Australia. For several years now, the Australian government of John Howard has come under fire for its attitude towards Australia's 430,000 Aborigines. They are the country's most disadvantaged group, who approximately make up 2.6 percent of the 19 million population.

Even United Nations expert treaty committees, CERD, HRC and CESCR, have all concluded that Australia continues to perpetrate human rights violations against its Aboriginal peoples particularly in reference to the mandatory sentence laws in the states of Northern Territory and Western Australia. Under these laws, repeat property offenders are jailed automatically, including juveniles. Most of them are Aborigines.

The second major point has been the Native Title Amendments on land law in Australia. Australia is the only country in the world with a Constitution which permits racially discriminatory laws. Additional to these land laws, all figures on social infrastructure and wealth (education, health care, income rates, unemployment, life expectations etc.) show a continuing and significant disparity between Aborigines and non-Aborigines.

Society for Threatened Peoples believes that there is a deep and systemic problem in the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples which requires a concerted approach by international bodies like the United Nations Committee on Human Rights (UNHRC) in order to garantee their survival as distinct peoples. Therefore, we urge UNHRC to push Australia's government for a fundamental change in its policy on Aborigine peoples, i.e. to particularly withdraw the Native Title Act Amendment and to abolish the mandatory sentencing laws. In addition to that Society for Threatened Peoples asks UNHRC to request the European Union to review and appropriate its relationship with Australia according to the human rights standard and in the spirit of its resolution on indigenous peoples of 1998.